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WILLIAM BYER

WILLIAM DYER,

A SOMERSET ROYALIST IN NEW ENGLAND.

By Louis Dyer

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

1899?

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WILLIAM DYER,

A SOMERSET ROYALIST IN NEW ENGLAND.

I enclose for publication in the pages of *S. & D. N. & Q.* a letter of some historical interest, written under exceptionally pathetic circumstances by my grandfather's great-grandfather's grandfather, William Dyre (Dyer), a Somersetshire man, who, along with eighteen others, founded the town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, on March 7th, 1638, and was one of eight Englishmen who founded Newport, Rhode Island, on April 28th, 1639, upon which day he was elected Clerk of the new Colony.

He was a Somersetshire man (1) according to a tradition which I have traced back among his numerous descendants in America as far as the unpublished memoirs of Joseph Chesbrough Dyer, a great-great-great grandson of his, who was born in New England in 1780, and whose life (most of it having been spent in Manchester) may be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography;* (2) This family tradition is in a measure confirmed by the peculiar orthography of the word soar, spelt *zore* in the appended letter, where I have on that account italicized it.[1]

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(1) The question has been raised by an expert whether an initial *z* for s, in such a word as soar—which does not, like genuine dialect words, go back to an old English original—can be evidence of the Somersetshire habit of speech. In well attested examples of Somersetshire we have, however, such forms as *zity* for city and *vashion* for fashion, and with these *zore=soar* must, I think, be classed. The publication of the letter is postponed until the next number of the *S. & D. N. & Q.*

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I have, in the course of several years past, looked up facts and dates about a very large number of Englishmen who lived at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, and bore the name of William Dyer. The only one with whom it is possible to identify the writer of the appended letter is entered in the 1623 *Visitation of Somersetshire* among the Dyers of Sharpham Park, Glastonbury, as William, the eldest son of George Dyer, of Bratton St. Maur (Seymour), near Wincanton, and a great-nephew of the distinguished Elizabethan Judge, Sir James Dyer. This George Dyer of Bratton was a nephew of Sir James Dyer, and the grandfather of Sir William Swinnerton Dyer, whose father's elder brother was, according to my identification, the writer of the above letter. There is no mention of this American Colonist, William Dyer, in English documents other than Colonial, unless we identify him with his namesake, William Dyer, stated to have been 36 years old in 1623, according to the Somerset Visitation of that year. The only mention of the latter upon which I have come is in the will of his grandmother, Jane Dyer, of Bratton Seymour, widow of John Dyer, jun., of "Wyncaulton, Somerset"—see Brown's *Somerset Wills* (6th Ser., pp. 60 and 58). The baptism of this William Dyer's younger brother and sisters was recorded at Milbourne Port, but no record of his baptism is found, so far as I know. There are some reasons for believing that this William Dyer followed the sea to start with, and before he emigrated to New England, but I doubt very much whether he can be identified with the Captain Dyer who gave evidence at the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh. This trial took place in 1603, when the William Dyer of the 1623 visitation could not have been more than about 16 years old, while the New England colonist—who died about 1677—can hardly have been older. In the following sketch of William Dyer's life, I venture to take for granted that the colonist and the son of George Dyer of Bratton can be identified.

Whatever seafaring experiences William Dyer may be supposed to have had in his earliest manhood, we find him at the age of 40 or thereabout (1627) in London as a "milliner in the New Exchange." There is no trace of him on the records at Haberdashers' Hall, but something might perhaps be found in the records of the Mercers' Company. He may perfectly well have been a seafaring man enrolled as a member of a London Guild. One of his father's half-brothers was Richard Dyer, "citizen and Merchant Taylor of London," whose will was proved at St. Dunstan's in the West on July 27th, 1586, and contains a bequest to "my brother William," our William Dyer's youngest uncle and putative godfather (Brown's *Somerset Wills*, 6 Ser., p. 59). For the fact that he was a milliner in the New Exchange, we depend upon two statements to that effect by no less a person than

Governor John Winthrop made in 1637 (October)—see *Colonial Papers*, Vol. IX., No. 74; and again in 1638—see *Winthrop's Diary*.

It is well attested that the Dyers in Somersetshire were on the losing side in the struggle between Charles I. and the Roundheads. Accordingly, the falling fortunes of his people might be assigned as William Dyer's reason for emigrating to the Massachusetts Bay. He appears in Boston, having married, presumably after he emigrated. However that may be, he and Mary his wife joined the Church of the Reverend Mr. Wilson at Boston in 1635 (December), and on the 20th of the same month their first son and child, Samuel, was there baptized. He married, then, at the age of 47. It has been conjectured—on what grounds I know not—that Mary, his wife, was of the same family (a Somerset family?) with Odias (Herodias) Longe, mentioned in the will of John Ayshford (Ashford), of Devon, a planter in Barbadoes—Brown's *Somerset Wills* (4th Ser., p. 58).

However sincerely a man of Somersetshire Royalist stock might conceive himself to adhere to the views of a congregation chiefly composed of East Anglian Puritans, the essential antagonism between the West and the East could not fail to manifest itself in the long run. Scarcely a year passed between William Dyer's reception into Mr. Wilson's Church and his signature, on March 15th, 1637, of a remonstrance affirming the innocence of Mr. Wheelwright, and that the Court had condemned "the truth of Christ." For this he was disfranchised just eight months afterwards. The galling and unnatural intimacy with people naturally antagonistic to him to which William Dyer and his wife during these eight months were forced to submit, is vividly shown by a curious paper now at the Public Record Office, London, stamped as of the Conway papers (*Colonial Papers*, IX., 74), and signed by "John Wenthropp, Gent. of the Mattachusetts." It is entitled: "A monstrous berth brought forth att Boston in New England, October, 1637." Here Governor Winthrop sets forth that "One Mary Dyer, wife of William Dyer, sometime milliner in the New Exchange, London, being both young and very comely persons, was delivered of a woman-child still-borne (having life a few howers before) two months before the time, yet as large as ordinary children are." Its "ears were like an ape's, . . the nose grew hookeing upwardes, . . itt had noe forehead, but in the place therof were fower perfect hornes"; . . it was "full of scales and sharpe prickes, like a thornbacke . . instead of toes itt had on each foot three clawes with sharpe talents like a fowle." And then the courtly Governor Winthrop, who might have been recording in the above fantastic and gruesome minutiæ some old-wives' tale current in the colony, is at

pains to declare in closing this discreditable document: "I saw this monster and doe affirme this relacôn to be true." How came it that so sensible a man could think he had reason to vouch for such a monstrous absurdity? The answer appears in the same Governor Winthrop's own diary, edited by the acute Mr. Savage. There Winthrop says that none but Mrs. Hutchinson and the midwife, "one Hawkins' wife, a rank familist also, and another woman had a glimpse of it, who not being able to keep counsel as the other two did, some rumor began to spread that the child was a monster." When Mrs. Hutchinson, for theological views akin to Mr. Wheelwright's, was expelled from the congregation, her friend Mrs. Dyer walked out of the Church with her. "For Mrs. Dyer going forth with her," says Winthrop, "a stranger asked what woman it was. The others answered it was the woman which had the monster." An elder taxed Mrs. Hutchinson with having concealed the event, and she declared that she had acted by advice of Mr. Cotton, the well-known divine. Winthrop then sent for Mr. Cotton, having first interviewed the midwife, whom he regarded seriously as a witch. The description quoted above is a verbatim reproduction of the statement made to him by this woman. He had the infant exhumed "with advice of some other of the magistrates and of the elders of Boston, and though it were much corrupted, yet most of those things were to be seen, as the hornes and claws, the scales, &c." After this the excellent Winthrop adds that there were alarming noises and shakings that accompanied the birth of this child. Winthrop seems to have spent a great deal of time in disseminating accounts of this visitation of God upon the unorthodox. Roger Williams at Providence had all particulars from him, and writes back, "I also thank you for that sad relation of the monster, &c. The Lord speaks once and twice: He be pleased to open all our ears to His discipline." Governor Bradford of Plymouth also writes to Winthrop: "I thank you for your letter touching Mrs. Hutchinson. I heard since of a monstrous and prodigious birth which she should disown amongst you." Even the father of the child had to take his part of blame for this family misfortune—made into a crime by theological hatred. As Winthrop piously relates: "The father of this monster . . was, the next Lord's Day, questioned in the Church for divers monstrous errors, as for denying all inherent righteousness, &c., which he maintained, and was for the same admonished." Plainly Winthrop agreed with the godly Welde, of the same Colony, in thinking here was a case of God "testifying His displeasure against their opinions and practices as clearly as if He had pointed with His finger, in causing the two fomenting women, in time of the height of their opinions, to produce out of their wombs, as before they had out of their brains, such monstrous births. . ." Mr. Savage, Winthrop's editor, rightly

calls attention to the fact that the persecutions instituted against Mrs. Dyer and Mrs. Hutchinson were the cause of these physical disasters so fantastically misrepresented by Winthrop, Welde, and others, acting as "proxies or attornies for the Most High, to Whose displeasure they scrupled not in attributing the cross accidents that befel their opponents." From Mr. Cotton, who had advised the hushing up of the whole misfortune, the congregation required and received a handsome and public apology.

The exasperation of William Dyer, who was disfranchised, on November 15th, 1637, within a month of his theological admonition and of so gross an outrage upon his family life, can only have been increased when, on November 20th, five days afterwards, he and others were disarmed "because the opinions and revelations of Mr. Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson have seduced and led into dangerous errors many of the people here in New England." More than ever, he and his wife might pass with Winthrop for "very censorious and troublesome," as indeed he describes them. It is accordingly not a surprise to find that these two much outraged persons left the Massachusetts as soon as they might. In March, 1638, William Dyer joined in founding Portsmouth, R.I., and in April, 1639, he figures among the founders of Newport, R.I. Indeed, his motives for abandoning the Massachusetts Bay Colony are set forth in the preamble of the Charter of Rhode Island as subsequently granted to him among others by Charles II. in 1663. The grantees, it is there stated, "did not only, with the encouragement of His Majesty's progenitors, transport themselves into America, but not being able to bear in those parts their different apprehensions in religious concernments, again left their desirable habitations, and transplanted themselves into the midst of the most potent Indian people of that country. . ."

So much remains to be said of the career of William Dyer in Rhode Island—of the trial, condemnation, and execution of his wife, and of the experiences of their second son, William Dyer, jun., Surveyor-General of Customs in North America for Charles II. and James II., that I reserve these topics for a second communication.

Louis Dyer.

68, Banbury Road, Oxford.

WILLIAM DYER,

A SOMERSET ROYALIST IN NEW ENGLAND.

(*Continued.*)

My narrative left William Dyer resolved to emigrate by way of rescuing himself and his wife and son from the intolerable position made for them in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. This was late in 1637. For similar reasons, Roger Williams had already planted Providence at the head of Narragansett Bay. South-eastward of Providence, between the "West Passage" and the "East Passage," lies a group of islands in the narrows or "roads" commanding the entrances of the Bay. The largest of these, called by the Narragansetts "Aquidneck," is the "Island of the Straits" *par excellence*. Thence, after it was colonized, the name Rhode Island seems to have invented itself (1) to take the place of the more outlandish Aquidneck. This island and those adjoining were purchased of the Narragansetts by William Coddington and his friends early in 1637, and thither went William Dyer in Coddington's company,—all of them more or less definitely outlawed by the oligarchical theocracy which governed Massachusets so sternly, and exercised a sort of theological suzerainty over the elder colony at Plymouth.

This "outcast people, formerly from our mother nations,"—England, Scotland and Wales are apparently meant,—"in the Bishops daies, and since from the rest of the new English over zealous Colonys" (2) numbered about 50 men. They landed near the north-eastern end of Aquidneck Island, and nineteen of their number, acting for the whole body, signed a compact "in the presence of Jehovah" incorporating themselves into a "Body Politick." Of this Body Politick William Coddington was named judge, and William Dyer clerk. This happened on March 17, 1638. In a short time the wiser heads among the Colonists discovered, apparently, that this first place of settlement was ill-

(1) The earliest use of Rhode Island for Aquidneck which I have discovered is in a deposition made by Coddington, dated April 14, 1652.

(2) See the Acts and Orders of the General Assembly at Newport, convened May 17, 1658, which adopted a letter to Richard Cromwell, from which the above words are taken.

chosen ; moreover an eccentric person, Samuel Gorton, from Lancashire, seems to have turned the heads of the more illiterate settlers. At all events the whole constituted government of the incipient town, which had been named Portsmouth, met together on April 28th, 1639, and signed a new compact "to propagate a plantation in the midst of the island or elsewheres," and to "bear equal charge answerable to our estates in common." William Dyer signed this as clerk and Coddington as judge, there were seven other signatures. Two days later, on April 30th, those who chose to stay behind at Portsmouth with Samuel Gorton, 28 in all, signed or affixed their marks to a third compact acknowledging themselves "the legal subjects of his Majesty King Charles" and "in his name" binding themselves into a "civil body politick. unto his laws according to matters of justice." Among the 29 who signed this embryo constitution, sixteen were unable to write their own names. Plainly the nine who signed the agreement to settle elsewhere were the picked and intelligent men of the community. One other West of England man among these besides William Dyer was Nicholas Easton of Lymington, Hampshire, and it is therefore not an accident that the first settlement was called Portsmouth, and the second took its name from near by,—Newport in the Isle of Wight. Indeed the gradually accepted name of Rhode Island may be connected with the currency in the West of England of "road" in the sense exemplified by "Cowes Road" off Portsmouth.(1) The New England Newport which these picked colonists finally chose to plant is the one pre-eminently desirable harbour in the whole of Aquidneck Island. The Settlement there was made in the course of the summer of 1639, and as the intending settlers sailed southward along the west coast of Aqudneck, they passed a small island not far from the entrance to Newport Harbour and "William Dyer desiring a spot of land of us as we passed by it, we did grant him our right in the said island and named it Dyer's Island.'. (2) This islet still bears its original name.

A very turbulent member of the new colony at Newport was Randall Holden of Salisbury, but he managed to make his peace with the self-constituted authorities, thereby devoting himself to planting a settlement on the mainland, south of Roger Williams Providence Plantation. He named the new town where settlement was begun in January, 1643, Warwick, not without obvious

(1) My friend, Dr. Wright, Editor of the English Dialect Dictionary informs me that the use of 'Road,' in the sense of a safe refuge for ships, has never been local in England, but belongs to the language in all parts.

(2) See William Coddington's deposition dated Oct. 18th, 1669. Confirmed by the concurrent testimony of Randall Holden from Salisbury, Wilts. Here is, then, another Wessex man to be counted among the original planters of Newport, although he was not one of the nine who signed the compact to settle at Newport.

reference to negotiations then in progress for a regular charter to be given by Charles I., through Earl Warwick, then the Lord High Admiral. Roger Williams had been sent to England from Providence in 1642 for the especial purpose of getting a charter, which he duly obtained on March 17, 1643. Lord Warwick's charter,—a copy of which is recorded among the Colonial papers under date of March 14, 1644 (1),—is addressed to the inhabitants of "the towns of Providence, Portsmouth and Newport." It grants them "a free and absolute Charter of incorporation to be known by the name of Providence Plantation in the Narragansett Bay in New England," and reserves the right to dispose of the general government "as it stands in reference to the rest of the plantations in America." How very vague were the grantors' notions as to this last reservation, and as to the relations between the New England Colonies is shown by another grant made by them on Dec. 10, 1643, which conveyed the whole mainland of the Narragansett Bay,—covering Providence and also Warwick, to the governor and assistants of Massachussetts Bay Colony, "with reservation of all lands heretofore granted and possessed by the Kings Protestant subjects." Under this last grant, the men of Massachusetts nearly broke up Randall Holden's new settlement at Warwick, and imprisoned Holden himself at Boston for a time. He was finally released, and a loose conglomeration of all plantations in the Narragansett Bay country, including Warwick as well as the three towns named in Lord Warwick's first charter,—Providence, Portsmouth and Newport,—was organized under that Charter in 1647 (2).

But Coddington was not satisfied by any such arrangement. He was a man of great ambition and wished to be at the head of an absolutely independent government on Aquidneck island. He accordingly went to England in 1649, and obtained a Commission as Governor of Rhode island which superseded the charter of Lord Warwick so far as Portsmouth and Newport were concerned. Indignation against him ran very high among the Narragansett colonists, since this move of his frustrated their long-cherished hope of cementing such union among themselves as should secure them against the intense illwill and overt attacks of the "new English over-zealous colonies." Also Coddington was known to be in constant correspondence with Massachusetts, where the men of Portsmouth and Newport were still outlawed. Furthermore Coddington had been high-handed and grasping in the matter of the distribution of lands when the colony at Newport took shape.

The brunt of resistance to Coddington's encroachments in the matter of land fell upon William Dyer, whose life was em-

(1) See Colonial papers 1574-1660.

(2) See Colonial papers 1574-1660.

bittered by contentions with this wealthy, energetic and powerfully connected East Anglian. For Coddington came from Boston in Lincolnshire, and may count as an East Anglian. The gist of the matters in constant controversy is set forth by an indignant remonstrance which William Dyer made in writing against encroachments by Coddington upon the regularly established highways of Newport. This declaration was made on February 15th, 1654, but the encroachments go back to 1639, when William Dyer was appointed to apportion lands,—a duty which he attended to more zealously than others who shared it with him.

Thus, when Coddington "went for England" in 1649, and returned triumphant with his Commission, William Dyer and he had been repeatedly at law, and it was only natural that the indignant colonists should select Dyer as their agent to join the agent of Providence, John Clarke, in going to England to secure the abrogation of Coddington's Commission. In the details of a lawsuit pending between these two enemies at the time when William Dyer went to England (1651) nothing is more noticeable than the bias of all Newport men against Coddington and in Dyer's favour.

In 1653 Dyer returned with letters from the Council of State annulling Coddington's Commission, and was appointed Commander-in-Chief on the sea against the Dutch. Gradually the consolidation of the Narragansett colonies was achieved, and the whole situation, politically speaking, was simplified by the submission of Coddington, and finally legalized by the Charter granted by Charles II. in 1663 to the Narragansett Bay Settlements as "a body corporate and politique in ffact and name, by the name of the Governor (1) and Company of the English Colonie of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." This charter was the Constitution of the "State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations" until the year 1842.

Louis Dyer.

68, Banbury Road, Oxford.

(1) Note that the Governor named in this charter is Benedict Arnold, of Cheselbourne, Dorsetshire, the life-long friend of William Dyer.

*There are additions in *pencil*, which are here shown by square brackets [ ].

WILLIAM DYER,

A SOMERSET ROYALIST IN NEW ENGLAND.

But the last and tragic chapter in William Dyer's life concerned his wife, Mary, whose inconceivable experiences at the hands of the Massachusetts Bay authorities were detailed in my first note on this subject. Mary Dyer sailed for England, according to a letter from Coddington to Governor Winthrop, in 1650, by "the first ship with Mr. Travice." Her husband, detained by his suit against Coddington, sailed nearly a year later. He returned to Newport four years before his wife, who had in the meantime become a Quaker, and was a minister of that faith when, in 1657, she returned to Boston on her way to Newport. Promptly arrested in Boston and there imprisoned, she was released upon her husband's intercession, and he had leave to take her home to Newport, but was "bound in a great penalty not to lodge her in any town of the colony, nor to permit any to have speech with her in the journey." Much of William Dyer's energy had lately been expended in the building of a suitable house at Newport, and he was permitted to have his family there during 1657-59. But early in the latter year, his wife, filled no doubt with added indignation against the Massachusetts government of that time because of the wanton and superstitious cruelty with which she had been pursued by their predecessors in 1637, insisted upon returning to bear witness again in Boston to her faith. This resulted in her condemnation to death along with Marmaduke

Stephenson and William Robinson, on October 31st, 1659. She was taken to execution and reprieved when the rope was already around her neck, at the instance of her second son William Dyer, Junior, a youth just in his early twenties, who was at the time captain of a coasting ship.

I find in the Bodleian Library a printed broadsheet, bound up under the title "Quakers" and with the shelf reference "Wood 645" which runs as follows:—

"A DECLARATION (*) | of the | GENERAL COURT | of the | | MASSACHUSETTS | Holden at *Boston* in *New England*, October 18, 1659. Concerning | the Execution of two Quakers.

Although the justice of our proceedings against William Robinson, Marmaduke Stephenson *and* Mary Dyer, *Supported by the Authority of this Court, the Lawes of the Country; and the Law of God, may rather perswade us to expect incouragement from all prudent and pious men, then convince us of any necessity to Apologize for the same, yet for as much as men of weaker parts, out of pitty and commiseration (a commendable and Christian virtue yet easily abused and susceptible of sinister and dangerous impressions) for want of full information, may be less satisfied, & men of perverser principles, may take occasion hereby to calumniate us, and render us as bloody persecutors, to satisfie the one and stop the mouths of the other, we thought it requisite to declare.* That about three years since divers persons professing themselves *Quakers* (of whose pernicious Opinions and Practices we had received intelligence fromgood hands, from *Barbadoes* to *England*,) arrived at *Boston*, whose persons were only secured to be sent away by the first opportunity, without censure or punishment, although their professed tenents, turbulent and contemptuous behaviour to Authority would have justified a severer animadversion, yet the prudence of this Court was exercised onely in making provision to secure peace and order here established against their attempts whose design (we were well assurd of by our own experience, as well as by the example of their predecessors in *Munster*) was to undermine and ruin the same, And accordingly a Law was made and published prohibiting all Masters of Ships to bring any *Quakers* into this jurisdiction and themselves from comming in on penalty of the House of Correction till they could be sent away. Notwithstanding which by a back Door they found entrance, and the penalty inflicted on themselves, proving insufficient to restrain their impudent and insolent obtrusions, was increased by the loss of the ears of those that offended the second time, which also being too weak a defence against their impetuous fanatick fury, necessitated us to endeavour our security, and upon serious consideration after the former experiments, by their incessant assaults, a Law was made that such persons should be banished on pain of Death, according to the example of *England* in their provision against *Jesuites*, which sentence being regularly pronounced at the last Court of Assistants against the parties above named, and they either returning or continuing presumptuously in this jurisdiction, after the time limited, were apprehended, and owning themselves to be the persons banished, were sentenced (by the Court) to death, according to the Law aforesaid which hath been executed upon two of them: *Mary Dyer* upon the petition of her Son and the mercy and clemency of this Court, had liberty to depart within two dayes, which she hath accepted of.

The consideration of our gradual proceeding, will vindicate us from the clamorous accusations of severity; our own just and necessary defence calling upon us (other means fayling) to offer the poynt, which these persons have vio-

* These marks indicate the ends of lines in the capitalized heading.

lently, and wilfully rushed upon, and thereby become *felons de se*, which might it have been prevented and the Soveraign Law *Salus populi* been preserved, our former proceedings, as well as the sparing *Mary Dyer*, upon an inconsiderable intercession, will manifestly evince, we desire their lives absent, rather then their death present.

Printed by their order in
Reprinted in *London*, 1659.† NEW ENGLAND
Edward Rawson, Secretary.

FINIS."

Mary Dyer's answer to this, written the day after her reprieve was: "Once more to the General Court in Boston speaks Mary Dyer even as before: My life is not accepted nor availeth me in comparison of the lives and liberty of the truth." How she went a round-about way from Boston to Shelter Island,—off the extreme Eastern end of Long Island,—and tarried there for a time with other Quakers, under the protection of Nathaniel Sylvester, will be realized by those who have seen the monument erected some 16 years ago on Shelter Island by the late Professor Horsford. By the end of May, 1660, this intrepid woman again appeared in Boston and summoned authority there to execute their iniquitous law upon her, or else to abolish it. In spite of the eloquent plea from her husband, which is subjoined, Mary Dyer was hanged from a tree, which only perished in 1879. But she had her way, for, within a year, Charles II. required the abolition of the death penalty against Quakers.

WILLIAM DYRE TO GOVERNOR ENDICOTT.

Honor^{d} S^{r}

It is no little greif of mind, and sadness of hart that I am necessitated to be so bould as to supplicate yo^{r} Honor^{d} self wth the Hon^{ble} Assembly of yo^{r} Generall Courte to extend yo^{r} mercy and fauo^{r} once agen to me & my children, little did I dream that euer I shuld haue had occasion to petit'on you in a matter of this nature, but so it is that throw the deuine prouidence and yo^{r} benignity my sonn obtayned so much pitty & mercy att yo^{r} hands as to enjoy the life of his mother, now my supplicat'on to yo^{r} Honor's is to begg affectionatly the life of my deare wife tis true I haue not seen her aboue this half yeare & therefor cannot tell how in the frame of her spiritt she was moued thus againe to runn so great a Hazard to herself, and perplexity to me & mine & all her freinds & well wishers: so itt is from Shelter Iland about by Pequid Narragansett & to the Towne of Prouidence she secrettly & speedyly journyed, & as secrettly from thence came to yor jurisdiction, unhappy journy,

† No traces exist of the original printing in New England here alluded to. Possibly the notion that this document was a reprint arose in England, where its apologetic temper would excite no surprise.

may I say, & woe to that generat'on say I that giues occasion thus of greif & troble (to thos that desires to be quiett) by helping one another (as I may say) to Hazard their liues for I know not whatt end or to what purpose; if her zeale be so greatt as thus to aduenture, oh Lett yo^{r} fauor & Pitty surmount itt & saue her life Lett not yo^{r} forwonted compassion bee conquered by her inconsiderate maddness, & how greatly will yo^{r} renowne bee spreade if by so conquering you become victorious, what shall I say more, I know you are all sensible of my condition. and lett the reflect bee, and you will see whatt my petit'on is and what will giue me & mine peace, oh Lett mercies wings once more ZORE aboue justice ballance, & then whilst I liue shall I exalt yo^{r} goodness butt otherwayes; twill be a languishing sorrow yea so great that I shuld gladly suffer the blow att once much rather: I shall forbeare to troble you^{r} Hon^{rs} wth words neyther am I in a capacity to expatiat myself att present: I only say this yo^{r} selues haue been & are or may bee husbands to wife or wiues so am I, yea to one most dearely beloued: oh do not you depriue me of her, but I pray giue her me once agen & I shall bee so much obleiged for euer, that I shall endeavor continually to utter my thankes & render yo^{r} Loue & Hon^{r} most renowned: pitty mee, I begg itt wth teares, and rest yo^{rs}

most humbly suppliant

Portsmo' 27th of 3^{d}: 1660 Wm. Dyre.

Most Honrd S^{r} Lett these lines by yo fauo^{r} bee my Petit'on to yo^{r} Honb^{le} Generall Court: at present sitting S^{d} W. D.

Louis Dyer.

68, Banbury Road, Oxford.

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